

The Importance Of Baby Sleep



All living creatures need sleep. Sleeping gives people and all living creatures the time for the body to recuperate and regenerate.

Lion's needs 16 to 18 hours of sleep, while primates, ten to twelve hours of sleep. Humans need on average six to eight hours sleep to rejuvenate. Human babies need a full eight hours of sleep and naps in between.

The body uses sleep as a way to regenerate cells and refresh the brain and overall aids in the development of our body, mind, and health. During our sleep, the human body can regenerate hair follicles, fingernails, toenails and even the outer covering of the skin. This happens because of the automatic pilot that is built into our bodies.

People tend to think that the body only needs to recharge spent energy on the day's work but in truth the body works the regeneration cycle much faster when the brain does not control much action.

Babies therefore need their sleeping time to develop muscles, limbs, and skeletal structure. In order to achieve a good night's sleep for your baby, it is important that your baby have comfortable and inviting bedding.

The secret to a good bed is one that feels just right. Beds that are too big may make your little one feel insecure. Your baby's bed should be cozy and offer security for them to get a good night sleep. Selecting the proper bedding should also be a concern.

The bedding should be easy to touch and feel cozy. Bedding that is too stiff or even too fluffy decreases your baby's comfort level and therefore reduces his/her sleep time. We would want our babies to enjoy their beds and consider it a place of security.

Try to make your baby's sleeping experience a pleasant one. Bedding should be inviting to the eye. There are so many wonderful patterns and fabrics on the market today that choosing the right bedding should not be too difficult.

Remember that your baby needs enough rest to stimulate his/her growth and development and when this is achieved, your baby can reach his full potential.

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The 6 Top Reasons Your Kid Needs Sleep

1.Sleep promotes growth

You've probably had mornings where you've sworn your baby got bigger overnight, and you'd be right. "Growth hormone is primarily secreted during deep sleep," says Judith Owens, M.D., director of sleep medicine at Children's National Medical Center, in Washington, D.C., and a Parents advisor. Mother Nature seems to have protected babies by making sure they spend about 50 percent of their time in this deep sleep, considered to be essential for adequate growth. Italian researchers, studying children with deficient levels of growth hormone, have found that they sleep less deeply than average children do.

2. Sleep helps beat germs

During sleep, children (and adults) also produce proteins known as cytokines, which the body relies on to fight infection, illness, and stress. (Besides battling illness, they also make us sleepy, which explains why having the flu or a cold feels so exhausting. It forces us to rest, which further aids the body's ability to heal.) Too little sleep appears to impact the number of cytokines on hand. And it's been found that adults who sleep fewer than seven hours per night are almost three times more likely to develop a cold when exposed to that virus than those who sleep eight or more hours. While there's little data on young children, studies of teens have found that reported bouts of illness declined with longer nightly sleep.

3. Sleep affects weight

There's increasing evidence that getting too little sleep causes kids to become overweight, starting in infancy. One study from Penn State Children's Hospital has shown that when parents are coached on the difference between hunger and other distress cues and begin to soothe without feeding -- using such techniques as swaddling and swinging -- babies are more likely to be sound sleepers, and less likely to be overweight. Better yet? This coaching can begin when babies are 2 weeks old. The study followed the babies for a full year, and found that when parents used these techniques, it paid off. "Our intervention was the first to show that babies could actually be leaner in the first year," says Ian Paul, M.D., lead author and professor of pediatrics at Penn State College of Medicine.

That's key, because the sleep-weight connection seems to snowball. When we've eaten enough to be satisfied, our fat cells create the hormone leptin, which signals us to stop eating. Sleep deprivation may impact this hormone, so kids keep right on eating. "Over time, kids who don't get enough sleep are more likely to be obese," says Dorit Koren, M.D., a pediatric endocrinologist and sleep researcher at the University of Chicago.

Worn-out kids also eat differently than those who are well rested. "Research has shown that children, like adults, crave higher-fat or higher-carb foods when they're tired," Dr. Koren says. "Tired children also tend to be more sedentary, so they burn fewer calories."

4. Sleep reduces injury risk

Kids are clumsier and more impulsive when they don't get enough sleep, setting them up for accidents. One study of Chinese children found those who were short sleepers (i.e., fewer than nine hours per night for school-age children) were far more likely to have injuries that demanded medical attention. And 91 percent of kids who had two or more injuries in a 12-month period got fewer than nine hours of sleep per night.

5. Sleep boosts learning

A baby may look peaceful when he's sleeping, but his brain is busy all night long. Researchers at Columbia University Medical Center have shown that newborns actually learn in their sleep: Investigators played certain sounds for sleeping newborns, followed with a gentle puff of air on their eyelids. Within 20 minutes, the sleeping babies -- who were between 1 and 2 days old -- had already learned to anticipate the air puff by squinting. And as for that twitching all babies do as they snooze? It seems to be how their nervous system tests the connection between the brain and muscles.

6. Sleep increases kids' attention span

Children who consistently sleep fewer than ten hours a night before age 3 are three times more likely to have hyperactivity and impulsivity problems by age 6. "But the symptoms of sleep-deprivation and ADHD, including impulsivity and distractibility, mirror each other almost exactly," explains Dr. Owens. In other words, tired kids can be impulsive and distracted even though they don't have ADHD. No one knows how many kids are misdiagnosed with the condition, but ruling out sleep issues is an important part of the diagnosis, she says. For

school-age kids, research has shown that adding as little as 27 minutes of extra sleep per night makes it easier for them to manage their moods and impulses so they can focus on schoolwork. Kids with ADHD also seem to be more vulnerable to the effects of too little sleep. Parents are almost three times as likely to report that their child with ADHD has a hard time falling and/or staying asleep than parents whose kids don't have ADHD, says Dr. Owens.

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